

**MINUTES**  
**SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BJ's Restaurant**  
**990 N Center Street**  
**Gaylord, Michigan**  
**August 9, 2005**

**Chairman Manson** called the meeting of the Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 10:42 a.m., Tuesday, August 9, 2005 in Gaylord, Michigan.

**Members Present:**

Bill Manson, Region III, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA), Grand Rapids  
James Duke, Region I, MSA, Munising  
Bill Lucas, Region II, MSA, Cadillac  
Lee Murray, At-Large, Hopkins  
Jack Nelson, Business Community, Greenville

**Members Absent:**

Orville Olson, Representative at Large, Ludington  
Elza Inman, Grant Sponsor, Brethren

**Ex-Officio Members Present:**

Rose Ingram, USDA, Huron-Manistee National Forest  
Scott Haas, US Forest Service - Baldwin  
Terry L. Johnson, Antrim County Sheriff Department

**Staff Present:**

Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing  
Steve Kubisiak, Motorized Vehicle Program Manager, FMFM, Lansing  
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing  
Dayle Garlock, FMFM, Gaylord  
Don Klingler, FMFM, Gaylord  
Christie Pollock, Grants, Contracts and Customer Service (GCACS), Lansing  
Joe Soncrainte, FMFM, Atlanta

**Mr. Manson** welcomed everyone. The Snowmobile Advisory Committee, Department of Natural Resources (Department) staff and audience introduced themselves.

**Mr. Manson** reported that Orville Olson is in the hospital and Elza Inman has suffered a stroke. He will update the SAC as more information becomes available.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the June 21, 2005, Snowmobile Advisory Committee Meeting was acknowledged.

**Motion by Mr. Duke to adopt the minutes of the June 21, 2005 meeting as corrected; seconded by Mr. Lucas. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.**

**Chocolay Township Legislative Request for Speed Limit** – **Mr. Manson** asked Mr. Radabaugh if a sign with a recommended speed limit would be enforceable.

**Mr. Radabaugh** advised that based on discussions with Law Enforcement, a Director's Order would be needed for any type of posted speed limit sign.

**Mr. Manson** said he took this issue back to the Michigan Snowmobile Association and the association does not support a posted speed limit.

**Mr. Murray** expressed concern with the wording on the sign that is currently posted by the township, and questioned its enforceability. Discussion continued over the location of postings in the residential area.

**Mr. Manson** said that Capt. Curt Bacon told him that Conservation Officers will write tickets as they see necessary, citing the violation of "reasonable and prudent" speed. **Sheriff Terry Johnson** added that from an enforcement and prosecution perspective the key phrase is "reasonable and prudent". The burden of proof is on the law enforcement officer to prove in a court of law that an individual is not operating a snowmobile at a reasonable or prudent speed.

**Mr. Manson** inquired about the status of the other proposals made by local Department staff to control speeds such as plantings, modifications to trail alignment and fencing within the residential area. **Mr. Lucas** expressed safety concerns, citing tree plantings could potentially hide young children, and fencing and curves could be dangerous. **Mr. Duke** added that leaving trails un-groomed is against what the group is trying to accomplish.

**Mr. Manson called for a roll-call vote regarding a posted 35 mph speed limit for a two year test period.**

Lucas – Nay  
Duke – Nay  
Murray – Nay  
Nelson – Nay  
Manson – Nay

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Sponsor Maintenance Costs** – **Olson** Tabled. Mr. Olson's report will be made at the next meeting.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**FY 04-05 Fuel Cost** – **Mr. Kennedy** referred the Committee to the information in their packet. He reported the total average fuel cost for the FY 04-05 season was \$1.23 per mile based on self reported sponsor costs. This is below the \$1.27 fuel cost amount that was adjusted last year. He reported a total of 492,303 miles were groomed last season. A total of 377,502 miles were groomed in the Upper Peninsula, up 12% from the previous season. Approximately 99,563 miles were groomed in the Lower Peninsula, down 25% from the previous season. Discussion ensued.

**FY 04-05 Equipment List** – **Mr. Kennedy** distributed a list of eligible sponsors. Thirty (30) sponsors are eligible based on evaluation criteria. Twenty (20) groomers @ \$90,000 ea. (\$1,800,000), fourteen (14) drags or brush hogs @ \$9000 ea. (\$126,000). Grand total \$1,926,000.

**FY 05-06 Reimbursement Rates** – **Mr. Kennedy** reported the FY 05-06 grooming reimbursement rate will be \$3.90 per mile. The rate is based on the workgroup recommendations listed below:

Average cost of fuel per mile	\$1.23
Labor	\$2.15
Maintenance	\$0.52
<b>Total Grant Reimbursement Per Mile</b>	<b>\$3.90</b>

**Yuma to Copemish Trail Status** – **Mr. Radabaugh** reported on the status of the lease negotiations between the Department and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The proposed lease agreement will be for year around use for five years. The Department's original proposal was for a width just wide enough for trail use, but MDOT countered with an offer to include the full width of the rights-of-way. The cost of the lease will be based on the fair market value of the property. MDOT does not have a schedule for appraisal yet, but offered to expedite the process by allowing the Department to hire an independent appraiser. The cost of the appraisal is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 dollars. **Mr. Radabaugh** recommended letting MDOT do the appraisal and asked the SAC for guidance. The consensus of the SAC was to let MDOT do the appraisal.

**Mr. Radabaugh** said it is his understanding that the snowmobile club has a lease for the upcoming season, so snowmobile use would not be interrupted. **Mr. Lucas** will verify.

**Permanent Trails Funding Status** – **Mr. Radabaugh** reported the Department has put in a work order request to carry forward the \$4 million dollar supplemental appropriation that was approved in last year's budget. Justifications were provided to the Department Budget Office. There has been no update from the Office of the Attorney General regarding the question of whether or not the Department has the authority to write grants to non-profit organizations to acquire rights of property on behalf of the state.

**Mr. Radabaugh** reported that there has been a challenge of ownership on one of the railroad corridors in the Upper Peninsula. The courts ruled in favor of land owners. This case deals with title issues relating to ownership being dissolved at the time of transfer. The ruling may have statewide implications. **Mr. Radabaugh** said he is considering contacting the National Rails to Trails Conservancy for guidance. The Department has begun a review of all trail acquisitions to determine which ones were acquired by fee. The trail will remain open to snowmobiling since the Department owns a center strip of the rights-of-way that is 15 ft. wide.

**Snophlyers** -- **Mr. Manson** reported that Anne Okonek faxed a letter to Mr. Duke in support of a grant to the Snophlyers. **Mr. Duke** read the letter. In order for the Snophlyers to become eligible for a grant they must have a groomer. The problem is the bank will not give them a loan unless they are assured the club will get a grant. A request was made of the Department to write a letter of intent to provide a grant to the Snophlyers. **Mr. Kennedy** reported the Snophlyers grant application is incomplete. Documentation of non-profit good standing, proof of insurance and documentation of site control is needed. **Mr. Kennedy** said the Department could write a conditional letter of intent once the missing documentation is received. **Mr. Radabaugh** agreed that this could be done and requested a copy of Ms. Okonek's letter.

**Law Enforcement** – **Sheriff Johnson** reported he is in the talking stages of developing a Snowmobile Enforcement Certification Class at Camp Grayling. Fifteen people have signed up to date.

**Recreation Specialists' Reports**– **Mr. Radabaugh** referred the Committee to the reports in their packets.

**Rose Ingram, USDA, Huron-Manistee National Forest** discussed the 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Lakeshore snowmobile trails status in the Baldwin area.

**Mr. Haas, Baldwin Ranger District** reported on 56<sup>th</sup> Street and said he sent Mr. Kennedy a letter of support for the project. He reported there are wetland issues on private property, and the required Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) permit has been applied for. Norm Theil, Trail Riders Snowmobile Club is working on easements associated with private land and public road rights of way needed for the proposed trail. Six tenths of a mile of the proposed trail is on a plowed county road. The cost for the protective webbing material through the wetland is estimated at \$50,000. A bridge is also needed to cross a tributary of the Pere Marquette River and is estimated at \$25,000. The Forest Service has applied for a DEQ permit and a decision is expected by December 1, 2005.

**Mr. Haas** also reported on the Lakeshore Snowmobile Proposal. He met the local Ranger and other members of the Forest Service. Under consideration are two routes. There are access and safety concerns regarding narrow road shoulders. The Forest Service has completed the necessary surveys for the portion of proposed trail located on National Forest System land and has identified an acceptable route. The Club is working with local landowners and local government units to obtain approvals to use their lands for trail use. Until the easements are obtained, the completion of the environmental analysis is on hold by the Forest Service. The club is charged with follow-up and resolution.

**Mr. Manson** requested that insurance issues be put on the agenda for the next meeting. He mentioned concerns over damages to grooming equipment and liability when groomers damage private property. **Mr. Manson** will discuss with V&V insurance.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**Norm Theil, Trail Riders Snowmobile Club** questioned criteria for equipment replacement. **Mr. Kennedy** said the criteria were based on the old formula, 8 years or five thousand hours.

**Martin Cottle, Sault Snowmobile Association** questioned fuel cost adjustments for this year and last year, and that gasoline has increased over \$1 per gallon compared to last year. **Mr. Manson** said he will review his workgroup notes regarding fuel cost adjustments. **Mr. Radabaugh** added that fuel costs were adjusted last season and taken into consideration when developing the FY 05-06 grooming rates.

**Larry Marzean, Alpena Snowmobile Club** asked questions regarding the lease on the snowmobile trail located in the limestone quarry. He had questions about a trail lease payment. He asked to be present with his field contact when the trail is inspected and was directed to work with his field contact.

**John Hauk, Presque Isle Sno-Trails** had a question about the status of the Rogers City Spur land exchange. **Mr. Garlock** advised that it is still in negotiation and that there may be something temporary for this season.

**Mr. Marzean** asked when a fuel cost adjustment will be made.

**Tom Gallagher, St. Helen Snowpackers, Heart of North Snow Council** said he felt that the 60/40 equation was better for the groomers than the current schedule. **Mr. Manson** explained that the workgroup studied the issue and took into consideration many factors relating to grooming operations and expenses. He said they are still hoping to get more accurate data, but feels the 75/25 equation is actually better. **Mr. Manson** said the workgroup is going to study this issue further.

**Mr. Radabaugh** added that the volunteer contribution is also a key component and should be a consideration.

**Mr. Marzean** asked Mr. Kennedy about the expected timeline to receive grant monies. **Ms. Pollock** said she is reviewing the applications and working on them now. Some are still incomplete, but she hopes to have the process completed by October 1, 2005.

**Bud Longroy, West Branch** asked about the handbook changes and when they will be done. Work on the handbooks will be ongoing.

**Martin Cottle, Sault Snowmobile Association** raised the point of new equipment costs, and fuel efficiency, number of times trails need groomed from one brand and age of groomer to another.

**Don Mraz, St. Helen Snowpackers** advised that the Pine Hill Bridge culvert was set in this week. He asked if the signs will be here by September 1<sup>st</sup>. **Mr. Kennedy** advised that the Department of Management and Budget is still using the same vendor for signs as they did last year and that decision has been difficult to change. The signs are expected to be delivered by September 1.

**Bud Longroy, West Branch** asked about the monthly utility payment and what that is actually for. **Mr. Manson** said the payment is to be used for building utilities and storage for the groomer. For example, electrical costs to plug in a groomer

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 27, 2005 at 10:30 a.m., BJ's Restaurant & Catering, 990 North Center Street, Gaylord, Michigan.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

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### **Public Present:**

Don Carroll, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club  
Jerry Janeski, Alpena Snowmobile Club  
Norm Theil, Trail Riders Snowmobile Club  
Larry Marzean, Alpena Snowmobile Assoc.  
Robert Eller, Alpena Snowmobile Club  
Don Mraz, St. Helen Snowpackers  
Tom Gallagher, St. Helen Snowpackers,  
Heart of the North Snowmobile Council  
Bud Longroy, Ogemaw Hills Sno Club,  
St. Helen Snowpackers

Dave Becker, Heart of the North Snowmobile  
Council, St. Helen Snowpackers  
Bradley Potter, Western MI Snowmobile  
Council  
Jim Barber, Jordan Valley Trails Council  
Jim Dingman, Trail Riders, Baldwin  
Rolland Rieger, Presque Isle Sno-Trails  
Rodney M. Altman, Presque Isle Sno-Trails  
Martin Cottle, Sault Snowmobile Association  
Allen Cottle, Sault Snowmobile Association  
John Houk, NE MI Council and PIST

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